

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 HONG K 01746 160828Z

20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SCA-01 IO-14 DPW-01 DRC-01 SAJ-01

/136 W

----- 065069

P 160430Z FEB 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9602

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

DIA WASHINGTON PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 1746

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SAIGON PLEASE PASS TO DAO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH VS

SUBJECT: PEKING DECISION TO EFFECT MASS RELEASE OF SVN PRISONERS

REF: (A) PEKING 0266; (B) USNATO 0800 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN AGREEING TO GVN REQUEST FOR MASS RELEASE OF REMAINING  
SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRISONERS CAPTURED DURING PARACEL CLASH, PEKING IS  
ATTEMPTING TO TAMP DOWN REGIONAL TENSIONS OVER PARACEL-SPRATLY ISSUE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HONG K 01746 160828Z

END SUMMARY

1. HONG KONG SVN CONGEN VUONG HOA DUC TOLD US CONGENOFF FEBRUARY 15 EVENING THAT PRC HAS INFORMED INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE RED CROSS (ICRC) THAT ALL 43 REMAINING SVN MILITARY PERSONNEL CAPTURED BY PRC IN JAN. 19-20 PARACEL ISLANDS BATTLE WOULD BE RELEASED FEBRUARY 17 AT 1200 HOURS PRC TIME AT LOWU/SHUMCHUN BORDER. ICRC THEN RELAYED MESSAGE TO GVN AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING DUC, ON MORNING FEBRUARY 15. ICRC SAIGON REP SANTI, WHO PARTICIPATED IN JANUARY 31 PRC RELEASE OF US CIVILIAN KOSH AND 5 GVN PRISONERS, AND NOE ICRC ASSISTANT ARRIVED HONG KONG EVENING FEBRUARY 15 TO AGAIN ASSIST WITH REPATRIATION OF REMAINING 43 PRISONERS.

2. DUC SAID PLANS WERE UNDERWAY ALONG LINES OF JANUARY 31 ARRANGEMENT TO FLY 43 BACK TO SAIGON AFTER RELEASE. SVN CONGENOFFS WERE CLEARLY HAPPY WITH DEVELOPMENTS AND SAID WHILE DETAILS NOT YET KNOWN TO THEM, THEY CONFIDENT SAIGON WOULD MAKE PROPER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS "IMPORTANT EVENT." DUC ADDED THAT BECAUSE OF LARGE NUMBER SVN PERSONNEL INVOLVED, RELEASED PRISONERS WOULD BE TRANSPORTED FROM LOWU TO KAITAK BY MOTOR VEHICLE INSTEAD OF HELICOPTERS. HKG AUTHORITIES INFORMED US CONGENOFFS THAT GVN PRISONERS WOULD BE BROUGHT IN MILITARY SIDE OF KAITAK AIRPRT AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE TENTATIVELY PLANNING RESTRICT MEDIA COVERAGE TO SOME PRESS AT LOWU AND

SVN JOURNALISTS AT KAITAK.

HKG AUTHORITIES THUS APPARENTLY TRYING TO KEEP SVN FANFARE WITHIN BOUNDS.

ON PRC SIDE, PEKING HAS NOT YET MADE ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHEDULED FEBRUARY 17 RELEASE.

3. DUC TOLD US CONGENOFF THAT IN CONNECTION WITH JANUARY 31 RELEASE, GVN HAD MADE A REQUEST THROUGH ICRC THAT PRC AUTHORITIES RELEASE REMAINING 43 GVN PRISONERS ALTOGETHER IN ONE GROUP. DUC SAID THAT SINCE PRC WAS NOW CARRYING OUT MASS RELEASE INSTEAD OF RELEASE IN BATCHES AS PEKING HAD EARLIER PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED, GVN WAS INTERPRETING CHINESE ACTION AS AGREEING TO GVN REQUEST.

COMMENT: PEKING'S DECISION TO EFFECT MASS RELEASE OF  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HONG K 01746 160828Z

REMAINING SVN PRISONERS, ESPECIALLY IN WAKE OF FEBRUARY 1 GVN MOVE IN SPRATLY ISLANDS JUST AFTER THE INITIAL JANUARY 31 RELEASE, SEEMS CLEARLY INTENDED TO VONVEY PRC DESIRE TO LESSEN REGIONAL TENSIONS OVER THE PARACEL-SPRATLYS ISSUE. THIS LATEST PRC ACTION THUS ACCORDS WITH OTHER RECENT SIGNS (REFTELS) OF PEKING SEEKING TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF CHINESE REASONABLENESS AND TEMPERANCE OVER THE DISPUTED ISLANDS CONTROVERSY.

ALLEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ISLAND CLAIMS, POW RETURN  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 FEB 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** garlanwa  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974HONGK01746  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** HONG KONG  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740227/aaaaayzr.tel  
**Line Count:** 116  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** (A) PEKING 0266; (B) USNATO 0800 (NO, TAL)  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** garlanwa  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 04 JUN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <04 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <29-Aug-2002 by garlanwa>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PEKING DECISION TO EFFECT MASS RELEASE OF SVN PRISONERS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, CH, VS, PF, PG  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005